



CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY CITY OF CHICAGO

Good Morning Madam Chair, Vice Chair Silverstein, and honorable members of the City Council. I would like to begin by thanking you and Mayor Lightfoot for your leadership and support in making Chicago Public Library (CPL) a world class leader in designing and delivering equitable, innovative and comprehensive library services to the City and beyond.

Chicago Public Library is the largest and most visited cultural institution in Chicago, providing free access to all who come through our doors. Our 81 locations serve as community anchors throughout the city, providing the free library services, information resources, engaging cultural and educational programs, and the technologies and tools that Chicagoans need to reach their goals.

We are especially proud of Chicago Public Library's ongoing commitment to removing barriers to equal access for every patron. In the last year, CPL has made enormous strides in achieving equity across the city. This fall, Chicago Public Library and Mayor Lightfoot announced an end to overdue fines on library materials. This policy change makes CPL the largest library system in the country to go fine free, presenting a model of equity and access for urban libraries across the nation. We found that overdue fines disproportionately affected those most in need of public library services, and lead to a loss not only of the materials that may not be returned, but also of the patron to their library.

In addition, with Mayor Lightfoot's support, CPL will open all of our neighborhood branches on Sundays in 2020; expand our now-decade old innovative YOUmedia program to 12 additional sites across the city; and open the West Side's first regional library since the 1970s. We work daily to serve patrons like the 102,000 children who participate in the annual Summer Learning Challenge, the 57,000 who seek help developing digital skills, and the over 111,000 students who attend our Homework Help programs each year. Every CPL initiative and program serves a common goal of ensuring that every Chicagoan can learn, grow, create, and ultimately build a stronger city with the help of their library.

Over 100 years ago, Henry Legler, the namesake of the new West Side Regional Library, wrote his *Library Plan for the Whole City*, which called for a constantly evolving system of library branches built into an institution that, as he put it, "so epitomizes the spirit of democracy." At our core, that is what CPL strives to do. We circulate over 10 million items per year and provide state-of-the-art digital content for download and streaming. Each of these materials represents

an expansion in knowledge by a Chicago resident, leading to a more informed and engaged city. In addition, CPL:

- Is the biggest provider of free digital access in the city;
- Is the largest provider of preschool literacy programs in the city.
- Provides 24/7 access to library services through the CPL website and apps where patrons can read eBooks and magazines and listen to audiobooks, get homework assistance, learn new languages and stream movies, TV and music;
- Offers the largest, most comprehensive free after-school homework help program in the country, with both in-person and online options;
- Provides one-on-one support and digital tools aimed at helping people improve computer skills as well as prepare for the workforce and apply for jobs; and
- Offers learning and information services with a highly educated staff of librarians with master's degrees and deep experience.

CPL's 2015-2019 strategy is winding down and the Library has been developing a new 2020-2024 strategy that will serve Chicago residents and communities across the city. This plan will respond to the evolving needs of patrons who wish to learn, thrive and grow in the 21st century, and will guide the Library's work for the next five years. Throughout this process, CPL has engaged our partners and stakeholders, including more than 800 CPL employees and over 16,000 patrons.

2019 Operations Overview

- During the first eight months of 2019, more than 5.5 million patrons visited a Chicago Public Library location to use computers, seek reference assistance, check out materials, attend an author program, take part in a children's program, attend a workshop, view an exhibit, or simply find a quiet place to read or study.
- The Library's website received over 7.4 million visits and over 36.2 million page views through September 2019, offering patrons 24/7 access not only to the catalog and rich online account services, but also to extensive sources of online information through subscription databases and resources, as well as reading recommendations for all ages prepared by CPL librarians.
- Through August 2019, CPL circulated more than 7.2 million items in all formats.
- As is the case across the country, the public library is the only place to access computers and online information for many residents. Chicago Public Library has provided nearly 1.1 million people free access to the computers in just the first eight months of 2019.
- The Library has provided Chicagoans approximately 2.8 million free Wi-Fi sessions across the city in the first eight months of the year.

- There are more than one million active library card holders in the city.

2019 Capital Projects

- The Library continues to invest in Chicago neighborhoods with new capital projects. All new or renovated libraries include Early Learning Play Spaces, YOUmedia for teens, technology, and additional meeting and study space.
- CPL opened 3 branches **co-located with CHA housing: Northtown, Independence and Little Italy**. The partnership with CHA offers these communities more affordable housing opportunities in unique buildings with library programs and services to meet the residents they serve.
- A new 17,000 square foot **West Loop Branch** opened. Donated by Sterling Bay, it is the 81st location in the CPL system, serving the fastest growing neighborhood in Chicago.
- The **Whitney Young Branch** in Chatham reopened after a complete renovation and 4,172 square foot addition to the existing 10,210 square foot, one-story building.
- The Legler Branch Library was converted into a **West Side Regional Library**, providing the West Side with a regional hub for the first time since the 1970s. By turning Legler into a regional library, we are ensuring expanded services, enhanced spaces, and increased accessibility and resources for the entire West Side community. **Legler Regional Library** will be a cultural and educational destination for children, youth, families and adults living in communities across the West Side.
- By the end of the year, CPL will complete major rehab projects at the Douglass and Jefferson Park branches.
- CPL has worked with the Department of Fleet & Facilities Management on significant neighborhood branch renovations and programmatic investments at multiple locations throughout the city.

2019 Programmatic Initiatives and Accomplishments

- CPL recently became the largest urban library system to eliminate overdue fines, which disproportionately impacted users residing in certain areas of the city.
- CPL's **STEAM Team** traveled around the city offering hands-on STEAM-based early childhood programs, reaching 8,000 kids outside the walls of the Library in the first nine months of 2019. The team visited Head Start classrooms, Daycare facilities, WIC Centers, Pediatric Clinics, Farmers Markets, Parks, and recently became the first library system in

the nation to systemically offer early literacy programming in laundromats, in partnership with Libraries Without Borders, the Too Small to Fail Foundation and the Clinton Foundation.

- During the 2018-2019 academic year, CPL's free **Homework Help** program delivered approximately 112,000 sessions with certified teachers, including in-person help, live online assistance, Test Prep sessions, and writing lab submissions. A recent Chapin Hall analysis indicates that CPL is reaching students who are most in need of academic support.
- Approximately 102,000 kids participated in the 2019 **Summer Learning Challenge**, combining to read nearly 91 million minutes and complete nearly 2 million STEAM-based activities. The Library worked with partners such as the Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago Department of Public Health, Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Park District, Art Institute of Chicago, and others to offer 4,700 programs throughout the city. CPL offered 4,361 programs for kids' ages 0-13 with 93,217 in attendance.
- This year, CPL's summer program offered a new "**Coder in the Library**" component, in partnership with Chicago Public Schools and Northwestern's Center for Excellence in Computer Science Education. These programs featured a new model of engaging young patrons in coding basics through hands-on, drop-in opportunities to explore a variety of technology utilizing various methods of coding. Overall, CPL offered 30 **Coding Camps** in six branches and another 72 Coder in the Library programs at six additional locations.
- CPL hosted more than 850 programs during the summer to give teens an opportunity to find inspiration, build skills and create the "YOU" they wanted to see in the future. The **Teen Summer Challenge We Are Chicago: Your City, Your Summer, Your CPL** was also a kick-off of the 10-year celebration of the YOUmedia program at Chicago Public Library, which officially launched on July 11, 2009.
- CPL honored teens, alumni, staff, funders and supporters as our **YOUmedia Champions** at the **YOUmedia Block Party** on Saturday, September 28, 2019 outside the Harold Washington Library in celebration of **YOUmedia's 10 Year Anniversary**; approximately 600 teens attended the event. Our YOUmedia Champions were honored for their unique contributions to and participation in YOUmedia since the program's inception. The Block Party included performances by teens, alumni, and librarians including an alumni poetry set, a showcase of teens from across our 19 YOUmedia locations, and the ChiTeen Mixtape, a by-teens-for-teens music project recorded earlier this year in our libraries throughout the city.
- Total attendance for CPL's signature **YOUmedia** program for teens was more than 44,500 from January through August, representing a 40% increase over the same eight

month period the previous year. The number of unique attendees grew 28%, totaling nearly 5,900 teens.

- This summer, YOUmedia released its very own music label ChiTeen Records through 8 concerts across the city. These featured teen artists who recorded and developed their music in YOUmedia for the ChiTeen Records Mixtape, which is available on the YOUmedia Soundcloud page. This project, which was supported through Illinois State Library funding, provided visiting artists who worked with staff and teens with equipment for audio recording and public performance.
- CPL's **One Book, One Chicago** selection *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* by Philip K. Dick, engaged over 35,000 Chicagoans on the topic of *Imagine the Future* through nearly 200 programs and events, including walking tours, art exhibits, discussions, music performances and more, to bring people, businesses and civic agencies together to engage with the book and theme. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* circulated approximately 6,300 times via print book and eBook formats during the 2018-2019 season.
- CPL's **Authors in the Library Series** presented high profile authors and other civic and cultural events on the mainstage at the Harold Washington Library Center. In 2019, CPL has hosted programs with Erica Williams Simon and Luvvie Ajayi, Dr. Margena A. Christian, Tim O'Brien with Alex Kotlowitz and Garth Greenwell, among others.
- The Library launched a new **Community Cinema** initiative, showing more than 800 films throughout the city to a combined total of over 8,000 attendees.
- CPL's Special Collections Division offered an exhibit at the Harold Washington Library throughout 2019 featuring the **Charlie Trotter Archives**. This collection includes photographs, menus, handwritten recipes and drawings by acclaimed chef Charlie Trotter as well as artifacts, such as plates from Trotter's restaurant. This exhibit demonstrates the development of one of Chicago's major fine dining restaurants and the charitable events, mentoring and educational outreach programs Charlie Trotter's legacy has provided to students and young chefs.
- The Library created an exhibit showcasing the archives of Apostle R.D. Henton, founder of Monument of Faith Evangelistic Church. The exhibit features photographs from his ministry, posters from revivals around the country and the TV camera that recorded the first broadcasts of services in the 1970s.
- CPL has been an active partner in the Mayor's Public Safety Initiatives. In July 2019, Legler Regional Library worked with the Mayor's Office in its effort to produce a community resource fair targeting the Pulaski corridor from Lake to the expressway. In this effort, City agencies and community organizations came together to address needs

of the community, including food and job insecurity, substance abuse disorders, health and wellness, and more. Similar community health and resource fairs are held at branches across the system- most recently at the West Englewood Branch.

- Over 18,500 meals were provided at 26 library locations in summer 2019 through a partnership with the Greater Chicago Food Depository's summer food programs.

Continuing Programs and Initiatives:

- CPL continues to offer the largest, most comprehensive free **homework help program** in the country. In-person Teacher in the Library assistance is available at CPL branches throughout the city, as well as online homework help seven days per week in both English and Spanish.
- Chicago Public Library continues to engage young children as well as their parents and caregivers by designing play spaces that support research-based school readiness activities and services to support brain, language and social development, increasing high quality early learning experiences for Chicago's children. CPL strives to help the youngest learners enter kindergarten prepared and excited to learn while engaging and supporting families as their child's first teacher.
- The **2019-2020 One Book, One Chicago** selection is *The Sixth Extinction* by Elizabeth Kolbert. CPL is offering a variety of events and programs, including art exhibits, discussions, performances, high-profile author events, and more, to bring people, businesses and civic agencies together to engage with the book and selected theme – *Season for Change*. This year's program runs through February 2020.
- CPL's **Maker Lab**, the award-winning advanced manufacturing lab, will continue to bring together people of all ages to explore their creative interests and strengthen Chicago's economic competitiveness.
- CPL will continue to offer the award-winning **Learning Circles** program, and will continue to expand digital skills through the CPL-created online tool - **Chicago DigitalLearn** - and will develop new content modules to support basic technology skills.
- **CyberNavigators** will continue to supplement the work of CPL librarians by guiding Chicagoans through the digital world and assisting with online job search, communication and workforce readiness.
- Patrons across the city will continue to have access to CPL's **Digital Collections** 24/7. Stream movies, music and download ebooks, audiobooks and digital magazines. Learn a new language with Mango Languages, explore Chicago's history through our digital archives, or listen to interviews with African Americans who have made significant

contributions in American life or culture through HistoryMakers – all for free with your CPL card.

- CPL's **Authors in the Library Series** will continue to present high profile authors and other civil and cultural events on the mainstage at the Harold Washington Library Center.
- CPL will continue to partner with the Board of Elections to use 22 libraries as **Early Voting** sites and 42 locations as **Polling Places**.
- CPL will work with the US Census Bureau and local organizations to ensure a complete count for the 2020 census.
- The Library will continue to invest in Chicago's neighborhoods with new capital projects. CPL is increasingly seen as an essential community anchor in all Chicago neighborhoods. All new libraries will include Early Learning Play Spaces, YOUmedia for teens, technology, and additional meeting and study space.

New Projects and Initiatives for 2020

- CPL will formally launch a strategy, focus, and vision that will serve Chicago residents and communities across the city. This plan will respond to the evolving needs of patrons who wish to learn, thrive and grow in the 21st century and will guide the Library's work for the next five years.
- In collaboration with the **Chicago Housing Authority** to combine public libraries with public housing and other community benefits, a new stand-alone **Altgeld Branch** will be built on a shared campus co-located with an early childcare center within the Altgeld Gardens public housing.
- The newly converted **Legler Regional Library** will reopen after an \$11 million renovation that will feature Interior and exterior improvements, including the addition of multiple community and study spaces, additional collections, and transformative early learning and YOUmedia spaces. It will also include a Maker Space and the first ever Art Studio in a CPL location.
- CPL will complete several significant rehabilitation and modernization projects in 2020, including a completely renovated **Merlo Branch Library**, as well as a major rehab project at the **South Shore Branch**.
- CPL and the Obama Foundation will complete the design and service plan for Chicago Public Library's **82nd branch**, which will be located in the future **Obama Presidential Center**.

- A working group has been formed to describe, evaluate and define CPL's current state of "collective care." This includes, but is not limited to, a social worker in the library pilot, professional development such as trauma informed and mental health first aid trainings, library collections, materials and resources, and the Social Services Community Liaison Unit.
- The nationally recognized **YOUmedia** program, which builds on young people's interest in technology and creating by connecting teens with skilled mentors to engage them in active learning in a teens-only space, will expand to **12 additional branches**. This expansion brings the total to **31 free digital media labs** around the city, creating links between students' academic studies, their personal passions, and opportunities to engage with peers who support and share their interests.
- CPL has been awarded another grant through the Illinois State Library to expand the Library's **Studio in the Library** initiative, building on the initial program which featured a mixtape from teen artists around the city. The expansion will offer the opportunity for teens to record and perform publicly at seven additional branches in 2019-20.
- In June 2020, the American Library Association will release a new book, written by CPL's Director of Children Services and Family Engagement in collaboration with the Museum of Science and Industry titled *Summer Matters Greatest Hits* as a follow-up to the bestselling book *Summer Matters: Making All Learning Count*. CPL remains the only public library system in the nation to receive an award from the National Summer Learning Association for excellence in summer learning, and solidifying CPL's national leadership in summer learning at public libraries.
- CPL will be opening a pop-up exhibit featuring the collection of Rev. Martin Deppe. Rev. Deppe's archives feature saved minutes, posters and other documents from the Civil Rights Movement as well as items from Anti-Vietnam War protests, the Nuclear-free Zone efforts in Chicago, and other events.
- In 2020, Chicago Public Library will mount an exhibition about the incredible public resource that is the Chicago Park District. Using storied Park District buildings, structures, and landscapes, and drawings from the work of renowned architects and landscape architects such as Jens Jensen, Daniel Burnham, and Frederick Law Olmsted, the exhibit will give an overview of the 150+ year history of Chicago's parks. We will explore the construction, development, and varied ways people use and experience Lincoln Park Zoo, Garfield Park Conservatory, Museum of Science and Industry, Soldier Field, the lakefront, and the fieldhouse, which was a Chicago invention. In doing so, we will show how Chicago has earned its motto, "Urbs in Horto; City in a Garden." We will work with a number of branch libraries to display reproductions of photographs in the exhibit. We have already published over 10,000 photos of parks on the library's website.

- The Library will complete replacing its public computers systemwide. Almost half of the library locations have received new public computers in the last 18 months and the remaining public computers will be replaced by summer 2020 with a new Windows 10 image.
- Through a grant from the Illinois State Library, CPL will digitize selected items from the Illinois Writer's Project papers and selections from the George Cleveland Hall Branch Archives. These materials capture the African-American experience in Illinois from 1779-1942. This heavily used collection will become available to a wider audience after it is added to the Library's online digital repository.

Looking Ahead

Chicago Public Library continues to democratize access to information and learning and provide world class services to every citizen of Chicago. At this current moment, libraries hold an essential role in our culture and are a powerful force in advancing equity and inclusion. Chicago Public Library serves to democratize access to information and learning for every citizen. From CPL's youngest patrons enjoying Early Learning spaces to adult learners utilizing digital skills coaching, the Library is working to increase reach and impact – with an increased focus on removing barriers.

Our library spaces and the skilled librarians and staff help children build early learning skills, enrich their understanding of science, technology, engineering, art and math, and discover the world around them. Teens are introduced to new interests, educational and career opportunities through mentor-led programs. We help Chicagoans compete in our workforce, guiding them with tools and support to learn basic digital skills and apply for jobs. We create collaborative spaces in which community members come together to share, to make and to create. Adults keep their love of learning, doing and reading alive through the diverse programs offered by the library.

We would like to thank Mayor Lightfoot, the members of the City Council, the Chicago Public Library Board, the Chicago Public Library Foundation, and the members of the Chicago City Council. Chicago Public Library is a national and international leader in libraries and learning, and with your support, we will continue serving Chicagoans with innovative ideas, impactful programs, enlightening resources and equitable practices. Thank you.